

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 656
By Curtiss

A RESOLUTION to honor the 1998 TSSAA Class AAA Boys
Basketball State Champion White County
Warriors.

WHEREAS, throughout the storied history of Tennessee high school athletics there have on occasion emerged teams that attain the level of success that all others hope to emulate; and

WHEREAS, not coincidentally, many of these teams hail from the basketball hotbed of Tennessee's Upper Cumberland Region, where area youth learn to hone their basketball skills at an early age; and

WHEREAS, this season the high school basketball spotlight shines brightest on one such team, the White County Warriors, whose unique blend of experience and athleticism enabled them to capture the coveted 1998 TSSAA Class AAA Boys Basketball State Tournament Championship over Memphis White Station at MTSU's Murphy Center; and

WHEREAS, the path to glory was not without challenge for Coach Roy Whited and Assistant Coach Todd Hess, as the Warriors began the 1997-98 season having lost seven seniors, including three starters from last year's team, to graduation; and

WHEREAS, led by Class AAA Mr. Basketball finalist Brent Jolly, the Warriors entered District Tournament play with a sterling 26-1 regular season record, and promptly disposed of Lebanon, 72-42; and

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WHEREAS, in District Championship competition against arch-nemesis, Murfreesboro Oakland, the Warriors dispatched the Patriots 65-47 before a packed house at Oakland; and

WHEREAS, after soundly defeating Shelbyville, 69-32, and Lebanon again, 63-36, in Region 4 action, the Warriors suffered the only blemish on their post-season record, falling to a talented Columbia team, 57-54; and

WHEREAS, the road to the "Big Dance" continued at defending Class AAA state champion Cleveland's home court, where the hometown Raiders and University of Tennessee signee Vincent Yarborough were unmasked by the Warriors, 52-50. In what will undoubtedly be described as one of the most exciting games in Tennessee sub-state basketball tournament history, Kyle Gribble hit a last second jumper to seal the win for the mighty Warriors; and

WHEREAS, not since the likes of the Blitz Kids in the 1970s or Roy's Boy's in the 1980s have the people of Sparta and White County seen such a talented group of Warriors take to the hardwood; and

WHEREAS, a legion of maroon- and gray-clad fans witnessed the opening round of State Tournament play against Bristol's Tennessee High, as the Warriors utilized their patented half-court trapping defense to establish a 39-10 halftime lead, and emerged victorious over the Vikings 60-39; Brent Jolly poured in 22 points in only 20 minutes of action and Kyle Gribble added 11 points for the Warriors in the win; and

WHEREAS, in semifinal action against the heralded Pearl-Cohn Firebirds of Nashville, the Warriors were down by fifteen points in the first half, but never lost their composure en route to an exhilarating 57-56 come-from-behind victory; and

WHEREAS, Kyle Gribble led the team with 18 points in this fiercely contested matchup, sinking two clutch free throws with 10.5 seconds left to extinguish the Firebirds; Jared Austin and Brent Jolly added 14 and 17 points, respectively, thus paving the way to the school's first championship appearance in 69 years; and

WHEREAS, in the title game, the Warriors jumped out to a 29-17 halftime lead over White Station en route to a 55-45 win; Brad Walker led the team in scoring with 18 points, while Brent Jolly added 15 points and Corey Wilson sank a crucial 3-point bucket to ice the game; and

WHEREAS, those Warriors earning special recognition for their outstanding play this season include: Jared Austin and Kyle Gribble, both of whom garnered All-District, All-Region and All-State Tournament team honors; Brent Jolly, who was also named to the All-District, All-Region and All State Tournament teams and, in addition, was selected Most Valuable Player in the state tournament; and Brad Walker, the team's only senior starter, who was named All-District and received All-State Tournament honors for his outstanding performance in the championship game; and

WHEREAS, other players who contributed immeasurably to the success of the team this season include: senior, Corey Wilson; junior, Bill Jones; and sophomores, Matt Bailey, Daniel Cole, Michael Cunningham, Brant Holman, Derek Masters, Cameron Mitchell and Stan Sims; and

WHEREAS, renowned for their unselfish play and relentless pursuit of success on the court, the Warriors are equally impressive off the court, as evidenced by their selfless behavior, genuine concern for one another and steadfast refusal to let go of "the Rope"; and

WHEREAS, throughout the season, Coach Whited and Coach Hess have done a superb job of molding the team into championship caliber, and for their prodigious efforts they are especially deserving of this body's commendation; and

WHEREAS, managers Josh Riley, Jeff Wright and Brad Owen, along with team statistician Gary Gravely, also played an integral role in the team's success this season; and

WHEREAS, the team also enjoyed the ardent support of the Warrior Pep Band and the White County High School Cheerleading Squad; and

WHEREAS, under the able guidance of cheerleading sponsor, Avalyn Pitman, the squad received the TSSAA's 1998 State Boys Basketball Tournament Cheerleader Award; members

include: Brandi Guy, Charity Pitman, Kristy Bumbalough, Kathy Johnson, Rachael McCulley, Jennifer Gibson, Laura Rogers, Jennifer Smith, Sarah Scoggins, Melissa Dodson, Vanessa Bradley and Melissa Wallace; and

WHEREAS, the team is also appreciative of the unflagging support of White County Superintendent of Schools, Donny Haley; the White County High School administration, including Principal Charles Dycus and Assistant Principals Mike Johnson and Ken Jolly; and the entire faculty; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this legislative body should honor those young people whose achievements are a source of pride for their school, their families and their community; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE-HUNDREDTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, That we hereby congratulate Coach Roy Whited and the White County Warriors for winning the prestigious TSSAA Class AAA Boys State Basketball Tournament, and extend to everyone affiliated with the team our heartfelt wishes for every future success.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That we hereby designate April 16, 1998, as White County Warrior Day in Tennessee as a tribute to this remarkable team.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That appropriate copies of this resolution be prepared for presentation to each of the persons named herein, with this final clause omitted from such copies.